

**Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC)
Rangeland Focus Group**

**Minutes
March 21, 2006**

Attending:

RMAC:

Representing

Ken Zimmerman	California Cattlemen's Association
Mike Connor	Public Member
Clancy Dutra	California Farm Bureau Federation
J.R. McCollister	Public Member
Neil McDougald	California Cattlemen's Association
Chuck Pritchard	Calif. Association of Resource Conservation Districts
Scott Carnegie	California Forestry Association
Leonard Hale	Watershed Council of Southern California
Mel Thompson	California Wool Growers Association
Jeff Stephens	CDF / RMAC Executive Secretary

Also Attending:

Tracy Schohr	Cattlemen's Association
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Items 1 and 2, Call to Order and Introductions:

Chuck Pritchard called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Item 3, Economic viability of California Rangelands – Values provided by the Range and Livestock Industry.

Chuck Pritchard initiated discussion by stating that he had contacted numerous authorities including UC staff asking for information. He concluded that no one has examined the issue of placing value on rangelands in the manner that he is proposing. He further stated that he is looking at values in terms of what is given up when rangelands are converted to alternative uses. Mike Connor confirmed that it is more than just economic value – ecologic as well.

Chuck Pritchard proposed that a list of values be developed and proposed the following:

- Grazing value – RDM

- Habitat for a variety of mammals, birds, and reptiles
- Water holding capacity and the impact from increase runoff
- Loss of plant species – trees and shrubs
- Carbon sequestration
- Aesthetics
- Open space
- View shed

The easiest way is to place a real estate value on land but that ignores the ecologic value. Mike Connor confirmed that real estate value reflects the higher value of an alternate use.

Mike Connor noted that assigning a dollar value for some attributes is difficult. Mel Thompson noted that with this list we are assessing social values that are intangible in nature. He then asked for Chuck Pritchard to clarify specifically what he wishes to accomplish. Mr. Pritchard responded that local government is not considering these values when rangeland is developed. He would like to provide planners with better information for making these decisions so that it is understood what is lost.

Leonard Hale noted examples in Arizona and New Mexico where large ranches are being bought and developed into cluster developments where residences are concentrated with much of the surrounding landscape remaining open. The owner may develop his small portion and the type of development is dictated to the lot owner. Mr. Hale stated they have been quite successful. Chuck Pritchard noted similar examples in California where development is made with the maintenance of open space in mind, but questions whether the open space was a viable working landscape.

Neil McDougald posed the question as to whether we should ask for information from the same UC sources Chuck Pritchard contacted about how other countries are addressing the issue. He cited examples in Scotland where 60% of the income to sheep operations is direct subsidy from the government that keeps the land owner on the property with a working landscape.

Chuck Pritchard emphasized that no one has looked at the total issue (value) and believes that to be a mistake. He is looking for a formula or method for evaluating the whole rather than just individual pieces. Mike Connor suggested that a literature review is a good place to start that includes other examples such as those noted by Neil McDougald in Scotland.

Mel Thompson noted that the Rangeland Resolution was the first step in recognizing the value of rangeland. At least it is the beginning of a public policy type of statement that rangeland values are worthy of consideration. He further stated that we know what it is worth but the rest of society does not.

Neil McDougald posed the question if this effort in estimating range value would have application to the Fire Plan, which does estimate rangeland value in a commodity sense. He explained that the last time the issue was raised with ranchers there was considerable concern that raising the value of rangelands would result in higher cost for fire protection services. J.R. McCollister noted that the last Fire Plan valued grazing lands at \$8.00 per acre.

Mel Thompson recommended partnering with the Conservation Easement community for assessing rangeland value as a strategy on how to proceed. Chuck Pritchard responded by stating that he prefers that RMAC first settle upon the message that needs to be promoted.

Mike Connor posed the question of what should be the course of action after developing a comprehensive list of rangeland values and proposed two tasks:

1. Board of Forestry could expand the Rangeland Initiative to include a comprehensive list of rangeland values.
2. Incorporate a comprehensive list of values into the California Fire Plan.

J.R. McCollister spoke in support of broadening the Rangeland Resolution to include a comprehensive list of rangeland values.

Mel Thompson suggested that given the capabilities of RMAC perhaps the best course is to solicit help from others that do have the skills to develop value rather than RMAC struggling with the task.

Ken Zimmerman noted that at the meeting attended by himself George Gentry, Chuck Pritchard, Jeff Stephens, and Stan Dixon it was the lack of effective county general plans and an abuse of CEQA that leads to poor planning for the management of oaks. Therefore, an update of county general plans should include a listing of rangeland values. That gives county planners a laundry list of values that can be used to evaluate the value of a landscape, regardless of whether economic value has been quantified for all resources present. The final decision rests with the local government. Neil McDougald stated that if County Planners are the target then the IHRMP for oak woodlands should be updated, because county planners are the target audience.

Chuck Pritchard noted that both the upside and downside of not providing value for rangeland resources have equal importance.

Mel Thompson brought up the CalFed Working Landscape as one that is currently operating with support from the California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA). This model may be able to provide RMAC with insight on how best to address the problem of assessing rangeland value and suggested that contact with this group be made. He recommended the CalFed Working Landscape Subcommittee which is chaired by CDFA as being the point of contact.

Ken Zimmerman recommended that RMAC work through the Board to compose a letter to the Secretary of Resources informing him of RMAC's intent to work on the subject of rangeland value, and ask for guidance from the Secretary on where RMAC should focus their effort. If the Secretary elects to provide RMAC with guidance and an assignment this will assist RMAC with focusing the work effort. Chuck Pritchard accepted this recommendation. Mike Connor stated that this approach is well advised given the Rangeland Resolution currently endorsed by the Resources Agency.

RMAC then reviewed the list of resources that may be included in the letter as:

- Grazing or forage value
- Recreation
- Aesthetics
- Wildlife and associated habitat
- Carbon sequestration
- Plants
- Water Quality

Mel Thompson recommended placing water quality at the top of the list given its importance politically. He further recommended that projected population growth be added to the letter content to demonstrate that RMAC's intent is to be proactive in avoiding future problems with the loss of rangeland values.

Chuck Pritchard reaffirmed his belief that consultation with the CalFed Working Landscape Subcommittee is highly encouraged.

Ken Zimmerman asked that the letter to the Secretary of Resources be reviewed by all RMAC members before being sent. The Focus Group agreed.

Item 4, Certified Range Manager (CRM) Program

Chuck Pritchard opened the discussion and then asked that Neil McDougald and Mike Connor present a review of the situation with the CRM program and the ability for enforcing the requirements for a CRM to perform work requiring CRM expertise. The CRM program does not require continuing education. Many recommendations dealing with rangelands are being made by non CRMs. There is one case that has been brought before PFEC. However, there has been no resolution due to an inability to define what is meant by rangelands.

Neil McDougald noted that any complaint should receive a timely resolution equal to that of the Forest Practices Program.

Ken Zimmerman clarified that the complaint was filed by him citing a case where a non CRM was operating in the Bishop area in conjunction with DWP (Department

of Water & Power). Since that time Mr. Zimmerman has entered into an agreement with USFS (US Forest Service), BLM (Bureau of Land Management), and DWP to utilize the services of a CRM to review all written documents generated by this cooperative group and produce a rangeland management plan that covers his property.

Mike Connor noted that the PFEC did consult with the California Pacific Section of Society of Range Management, asking for clarification of what is the definition of rangelands, and that he is an active member serving on the committee that deals with the issue of defining rangelands. However, SRM did not provide a response to the PFEC.

Neil McDougald cited research that he had completed including letters from Larry Bellew on the subject indicating that other groups such as the COF (California Oak Foundation) are getting involved. COF has stated in writing that an EIR developed for oak woodlands that does not employ an RPF or a CRM is invalid under the Foresters Licensing Law. He further expressed his opinion that federal agencies, such as NRCS (Natural Resource Conservation Service), BLM and USFS that are engaged in making recommendations on private rangeland should be CRMs. He also expressed concern that the CRM program is not being applied as originally intended by the program founders and wished to see it become a functional program with enforcement.

Ken Zimmerman reviewed the current definition of rangelands found within the RMAC Strategic Plan, and noted that a problem exists in that we have multiple definitions of "rangelands." Mike Connor agreed that the reason the CRM law is not effective is due to the conflicting definitions of rangelands.

Mike Connor and Ken Zimmerman in joint discussion posed the question as to whether the program needs modification or possibly elimination. Neil McDougald argued for continuing the program however it needs to be strengthened.

Clancy Dutra gave an accounting of how the program was created through the efforts of RMAC, Clawson, and Bartolome. Mel Thompson raised questions on how the program functions. Neil McDougald explained that the testing for CRM qualifications is done by the State SRM and that certification for passing is done by the State PFEC.

Chuck Pritchard and Neil McDougald noted that there is a National CRM Program and made reference to materials sent by Ken Tate informing RMAC of this program. Leonard Hale asked who administers this program and Neil McDougald stated that the national SRM is the administering body using classes for continuing education. There are no legal requirements under this program.

Chuck Pritchard noted that many people now practicing range management on federal ground do not have practical experience in the profession. They may be certified but are not equipped to practice range management.

Mike Connor proposed that RMAC recommend that the Board pursue an MOU with the Federal agencies (BLM & USFS) that will develop a program insuring the use of CRMs on federal ground. Mr. Connor stated that at one time an MOU was initiated with Federal agencies; however, it was not successful.

Mike Connor, Clancy Dutra, and Ken Zimmerman returned to the issue of the definition of rangeland and the problems posed by the Foresters Licensing Law as it pertains to “forested landscapes” and the Board’s interpretation to mean 10% or greater tree canopy cover. Mike Connor urged that adoption of the definition of rangelands as expressed in the RMAC Strategic Plan would clarify the requirements for a CRM.

Mel Thompson made the point that the RMAC definition could be inserted within the California Code of Regulations (CCR) section 754 “Forested Landscape” to make clear the definition of rangelands.

Mike Connor recommended that RMAC state the problem as being that it is not clear as to where a CRM is required, and ask the Board to accept RMAC’s definition of rangeland. Ken Zimmerman stated that asking for clarification on the definition for rangelands from the Board is appropriate. Scott Carnegie agreed that it would be appropriate for the Board to make the determination as to whether the change is needed within the CCR or the Public Resources Code (PRC).

Scott Carnegie and Mike Connor initiated discussion on the national CRM standard and reviewed the requirement for 32 hours of continuing education per every 2 years. The issue became whether to recommend that the State CRM program adopt the national standard. Scott Carnegie clarified that continuing education for RPFs is voluntary and urged that it be the same for CRMs. Mike Connor suggested that RMAC support continuing education as a requirement for CRM certification. Scott Carnegie spoke in opposition stating that administration of such a program could be quite cumbersome, and that any continuing education program should have the ability to credit work experience as part of a continuing education program.

Motion by Neil McDougald: RMAC shall compose a letter to the California Pacific Section of the Society of Range Management (State SRM) recommending that the Section adopt the National standard of 32 hours of continuing education per 2 year period, and that this be a requirement of CRM certification. Motion seconded and passed by a vote of five in favor, three opposed, and one abstention. Members Ken Zimmerman, Scott Carnegie, and Clancy Dutra opposed. Members Mike Connor, J.R. McCollister, Neil McDougald, Leonard Hale, and Mel Thompson in favor. Member Chuck Pritchard abstained.

Discussion returned to the case before the State SRM filed by Ken Zimmerman. The lack of response from the State SRM over a 6 month period was noted.

Motion by Mike Connor: Compose a letter to the Board with a copy to the State SRM that asks for clarification on the definition of rangelands in California, with a suggestion that the Board adopt the definition found within the RMAC Strategic plan. The letter shall be copied to the president of the State SRM. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Mel Thompson commented that the letter should state that RMAC definition found in their Strategic Plan was accepted by the Board in the 1980s.

Mike Connor raised the issue of timely response on complaints. Neil McDougald suggested that he and Mike Connor consult with Eric Huff and compare the CRM process with what occurs for RPFs. Mike Connor agreed and will make contact with Mr. Huff.

Meeting adjourned 12:00 Noon.